

**An archaeological evaluation of the proposed
extension to the 'south site' buildings
at the Sixth Form College, North Hill,
Colchester, Essex
May 2008**

**report prepared by
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**on behalf of
the Sixth Form College**

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1 Summary

An evaluation by three trenches has identified the uppermost significant archaeological horizon of Roman date on the site of the proposed extension to the 'south site' buildings at the Sixth Form College. A north-south profile was reconstructed using the results from all the trenches, and it became apparent that the Roman levels showed no clear evidence of terracing but instead broadly reflect the natural north-south slope of the land today.

The finds from the evaluation are dominated by fragments of Roman brick and tile, with lesser quantities of mortar, opus signinum, and tesserae. This material must be derived from the demolition of Roman buildings, and specifically of the Roman building first discovered in 1865 and investigated further in 1910 when the Technical College was constructed.

Although two of the trenches were cut within the footprint of this Roman building, none of its foundations or floors were seen, mainly because the evaluation trenches were not sufficiently deep.

The highest Roman deposits were rubble or mortar layers dating to the early-mid 3rd to 4th century, when the Roman building was probably demolished. The Roman deposits are sealed by a deep late medieval or post-medieval topsoil, which is itself sealed by soils dumped during the 1980s landscaping.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on behalf of and at the Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex, between 27th and 30th May 2008. Site centre was at NGR TL 99255 25320 (Fig 1).

The evaluation was undertaken prior to the design and planning proposal for the extension and enlargement of the existing 'south site' buildings.

The fieldwork and report-writing of this project follow the standards set out in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and also in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 2001a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001b). Other sources used are *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14).

3 Archaeological background

The Sixth Form College, formerly the Gilbert School and, before that, the Technical College, occupies a sizeable proportion of the north-west corner of the walled Roman town. Within this, metalled streets running north-south and west-east defined *insulas* (blocks of land). These have been numbered 1-40 and, in a few cases, subdivided (eg *Insulas* 1a and 1b).

In the college grounds, the lines of Roman streets pass north-south under the east edge of the old college building (now the Sixth Form College main building) and through the centre of the 'mid-site' development, and west-east under the site of the proposed 'south site' extension. Thus the college site straddles *Insulas* 1a, 1b, 9a-9b and 17a-17b of the Roman town, and *Insulas* 1a and 9a are wholly within the college grounds (EHER nos 12341 and 13108).

The southern half of the college site also lies within the site of the Roman legionary fortress, founded c AD 44 (CAR 3; EHER nos 43530 and 12341). The northern edge of the fortress should lie under the new 'mid-site' building, with the fortress rampart to its south, coinciding mainly with the grassy slope between the 'south site' and 'mid-site' buildings.

Normally, the *insulae* would have been occupied by Roman buildings, usually town-houses. In fact, a large part of a Roman building was investigated on the

Technical College site in 1865 and again in 1910. This building (the footprint of which is shown in grey tone on Fig 1) had tessellated and possibly mosaic floors, and painted walls, and is likely to have been constructed in the 2nd or 3rd century AD (Hull 1958, 93-4; EHER nos 12433-12437).

In 1984-85, there was a major excavation on the site now occupied by the 'south site' buildings. Parts of the *contubernia* (men's quarters) of a barrack-block belonging to the Roman fortress were excavated (CAR 6, 134).

In January 2000, an evaluation within the footprint of the proposed new computer block was conducted by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU). This uncovered between 1.4m and 2m of topsoil over a deposit probably derived from the demolition of a Roman building (ECC FAU 2000).

In 2003, five evaluation trenches were dug by CAT in the college grounds in preparation for the proposed 'mid-site' development. These exposed the remains of Roman buildings, ie tessellated and mortar floors, as well as the robbed-out foundations of a large building, probably a town-house, covered by between 0.6m and 1.1m of topsoil. These Roman buildings appear to have been demolished and the site turned over to agricultural or horticultural use at the end of the Roman period (CAT Report 260).

Additional evaluation work in 2005 by CAT in what was then the tennis court (now the 'mid-site' building) confirmed the earlier evaluation findings and produced useful data on the possible extent of the town-house identified in 2003 (CAT Report 309; CAT Report 260).

The most recent archaeological work was conducted between August 2005 and March 2006 (CAT Report 347 in prep), during the groundworks associated with the construction of the 'mid-site' building. Investigation revealed a Roman metalled street surface, which divided Insulas 1a and 1b, and two large Roman buildings. The first building, in Insula 1b, was a Roman town-house with surviving *in situ* masonry wall foundations and *opus signinum* floor surfaces. The second building, in Insula 1a, was an extremely large and high-status building consisting of surviving *in situ* masonry wall foundations, robbed-out wall lines, and floors of mosaic, tessellation and *opus signinum*, and a well-preserved room which may have been part of a small bath-house.

Large quantities of elaborately-painted wall-plaster, some of which was designed to imitate imported marbles, derive from a building in Insula 1b which, we speculate, may have been a *mansio*.

There appears to have been very little in the way of post-Roman activity on the land now occupied by the Sixth Form College grounds. Recent excavation and evaluation work has shown that a substantial depth of topsoil accumulated over the college site in this period. The usual interpretation of this phenomenon, often found in Colchester, is that the land was left open and was probably used for small-scale agriculture or horticulture.

Building work seems to have been confined in the medieval and post-medieval periods to the properties lining North Hill, many of which are still standing and are listed buildings.

4 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the height of the uppermost significant archaeological layer within the footprint of the proposed extension to the 'south site' buildings, and, as far as possible, to record its character, extent, date, significance and condition.

5 Results (Figs 2-4)

Summary of archaeological fieldwork

All heights given here are above Ordnance Datum, unless stated otherwise.

The evaluation site consists of an area of hardstanding (currently the service road) extending around the south-western corner of the 1910 college building, and an area of grassy bank to its south.

The intention was to give a complete north-south assessment of the relationship between modern ground-level and the uppermost significant archaeological horizon (as far as was possible, given the usual constraints of access, position of services, and so on). For that reason, three evaluation trenches (total length 24m) were placed as follows: T1 and T2 in the grassy bank, with T2 to the south of T1, and T3 in the service road on the west side of the 1910 college building.

A summary of each evaluation trench is given below.

Trench 1: summary (Figs 1-2, 4)

T1 was excavated by hand at the bottom of the grassy bank to the north of the 1987 college building, ie the southern part of the 'south site', and south of the 1910 college building.

The archaeological sequence was as follows. Modern topsoil (L1) sealed a thick deposit of modern builders' waste (L2), which in turn sealed a thick deposit of post-Roman topsoil (L3). The top of L3, as exposed in T1, sloped distinctly down from south to north, losing approximately 0.6m in height along the length of T1. This may be partly due to the effects of modern landscaping, but it is also due to the natural slope in ground-level down from south to north, which is quite pronounced in the college grounds. Unsurprisingly, this natural slope is followed by the archaeological horizons on the college site.

L3 sealed a mortar-rich deposit of Roman demolition material (L4), which included a substantial mortar dump. This is probably the layer resulting from the demolition of Roman buildings.

Natural geological ground was not identified in T1, the objective being to locate the uppermost significant archaeological horizon (in this case, of Roman date). This was L4, the top of which was at 23.9m, 1.1m below current ground-level.

Trench 2: summary (Figs 1-2, 4)

T2 was excavated by hand at the top of the grassy bank north of the 1987 college building and south of the 1910 college building.

The archaeological sequence was generally similar to T1. Modern topsoil (L1) sealed a layer of loosely-compacted modern building debris (L2), which is almost certainly associated with the construction of the new 'south site' buildings in the late 1980s. Sealing this modern layer (L2) was a deposit containing Roman building stone, pottery and tile (L5) which was probably dumped as part of the landscaping following the construction of the 1987 'south site' building.

Whatever its origin, the redeposited Roman material and the building waste (L2/L5) sealed post-Roman topsoil (L3). This material (L3) has been consistently observed across the Sixth Form College site, and is probably associated with medieval and post-medieval cultivation. Topsoil L3 sealed Roman demolition material (L4).

L3 again followed the general topography of the site, in that it sloped down from south to north, losing a little over 0.5m in height along the length of T2. Due to the great depth of this trench (mainly because of the depth of L2, L4 and L5), excavation had to be halted at a depth of 1.9m below ground-level, where L3 was still visible. However, an auger probe showed that L3 continued down to 650mm below the base of the excavated trench (ie at 2.55m below ground-level, or 22.40m), at which point the auger struck a highly compacted surface. It is not certain what this surface was. It may have been part of the edge of the east-west Roman street which should extend slightly south of T2. This gravel street was also seen in the 1984-85 excavations (CAR 6, 135 and fig 4.5).

Natural geological ground was not identified in T2, the objective being to locate the uppermost significant archaeological horizon (in this case, Roman), which is this gravel surface at 2.55m below ground-level, or 22.40m.

Trench 3: summary (Figs 1, 3-4)

Using a tracked excavator under archaeological supervision, T3 was excavated along the service road at the west end of the 1910 college building. It was cut through the tarmac 'hardtop' road surface (L6) and its crushed hardcore and brick base (L7). L7 sealed post-Roman topsoil (L3) along the whole length of T3.

There was no evidence of any modern topsoil in this trench. This is undoubtedly because the topsoil was stripped off during the 1980s building work and the construction of the service road.

After the removal of L6 and L7, L3 was visible along the entire length of T3. As in T1 and T2, L3 appeared to follow local topography in sloping down from south to north. It was also thicker at the north end of the trench than at the south.

L3 sealed a substantial deposit of Roman demolition material (L8) which contained mortar, tile, pottery and *opus signinum* fragments throughout. There was a noticeable concentration of *opus signinum* and mortar in the southern and middle parts of T3. This concentration must be related to the Roman building, recorded in 1865/1910.

Natural geological ground was not identified in T3, the objective being to locate the uppermost significant archaeological horizon (here, of Roman date). This was L8, at 0.75m below ground-level at the south end of T3 (23.60m) and at 1.6m below ground-level at the north end of T3 (22.4m).

6 Finds

6.1 General

by H Brooks

Finds consisted of a large quantity of Roman material, mainly from layers of Roman demolition material L8 and mortar dump L4. There was also a large volume of Roman material which was residual in post-Roman contexts, notably in topsoil material L3 and redeposited Roman material L5.

6.2 Small finds

by H Brooks

Table 1: summary of small finds.

| Finds number | Trench and context | |
|--------------|--------------------|---|
| 5 | T1, L3 | Roman glass object |
| 6 | T1, L3 | copper-alloy coin, probably 3rd century barbarous radiate |
| 7 | T1, L3 | bone pin fragment |
| 14 | T1, L4 | bone pin fragment |
| 15 | T2, L5 | worked stone |
| 8 | T3, L8 | copper-alloy coin; Sestertius? |

Table 1 is a brief summary. A full report by Nina Crummy will be incorporated into the report at the next stage of archaeology. Most of these finds were residual in later contexts. The exceptions are the bone pin fragment from T1, L4 and the copper-alloy coin from T3, L8. The coin from L8 appears to be a barbarous radiate, in which case it probably dates to the late 3rd century AD. If so, then it may be useful dating evidence for L8.

6.3 Roman pottery

by S Benfield

There was only a small quantity of Roman pottery (111 stratified sherds, weighing 1,355g). This is listed and spot-dated by context for each trench (see catalogue below).

The Roman pottery fabrics referred to in this report follow those used in *CAR 10*. The fabrics are presented as two-letter fabric codes and the full fabric name for each

of these lettered codes is given in Table 2 below. Where possible, the equivalent National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (NRFC) code is also given in Table 2 (Tomber & Dore 1998). The vessel forms, other than for samian and amphoras, were recorded using the Camulodunum (Cam) Roman pottery form type series (Hawkes & Hull 1947; Hull 1958). Samian vessels were catalogued using Dragendorff (Dr) form numbers, or other common form type references following those used in Webster 1996.

A detailed list can be found in the site archive.

Table 2: Roman pottery fabrics used in this report.

| Fabric code | Fabric name | NRFC code |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| AA | amphoras, all excluding Dressel 20 and Brockley Hill/Verulamium amphoras | |
| BA | plain samian forms | |
| SG | South Gaulish plain samian | LGF SA |
| CG | Central Gaulish plain samian | LEZ SA 2 |
| EG | East Gaulish plain samian | |
| TR | Trier | TRI SA |
| CB | Colchester red colour-coated, roughcast ware | COL CC2 |
| CH | oxidised Hadham wares | HAD OX |
| CL | Central Gaulish and 'Rhenish-type' fine colour-coated wares | |
| NF | Trier fabric | MOS BS |
| CZ | Colchester and other red colour-coated wares | COL CC2 |
| DJ | coarse oxidised and related wares | COL WH |
| EA | Nene Valley colour-coated wares | LVN CC |
| EC | early Colchester colour-coated ware | COL CC1 |
| GA | BB1: black-burnished ware, category 1 | DOR BB1 |
| GB | BB2: black-burnished ware, category 2 | COL BB2 |
| GX | other coarse wares, principally locally-produced grey wares | |
| HZ | large storage jars and other vessels in heavily-tempered grey wares | |
| KX | black-burnished ware (BB2) types in pale grey ware | |
| TY | other British mortaria (not Colchester or Verulamium) | |
| TN | Oxford red/grey fabric with cream slip | OXF WS |
| TZ | mortaria, Colchester and mortaria imported from the Continent | |
| WC | miscellaneous grey and pale grey wares | |

Catalogue of Roman pottery

T1

L1, finds number 1, 48 g.

Fabric CH, 1 sherd; Fabric DJ, 2 sherds; Fabric GB, 1 sherd.

Pottery dated: late 3rd-4th, probably 4th century.

L2, finds number 2, 161 g.

Fabric BA(CG), 1 sherd Dr 45; Fabric BA(EG), 1 sherd; Fabric DJ, 2 sherds; Fabric EA, 2 sherds; Fabric EE, 1 sherd; Fabric CZ, 2 sherds; Fabric GA, 1 sherd, probably Cam 279 jar; Fabric GB, 3 sherds, Cam 37?B; Fabric GX, 3 sherds; Fabric KX, 1 sherd, Cam 305; Fabric TN, 1 sherd.

Pottery dated: mid-late 3rd to 4th century.

L3, finds number 3, 679 g.

Fabric AJ, 1 sherd; Fabric BA(CG), 1 sherd, abraded; Fabric BA(TR) Trier, Dr 45 rim; Fabric DJ, 1 sherd; Fabric CB 1 sherd; Fabric CZ, 2 sherds, one with barbotine, probably the ears of a hare; Fabric EA, 3 sherds from 2 beakers, Cam 408-410; Fabric GA, 3 sherds, Cam 279C, Cam 304 or 305A; Fabric GB, 2 sherds, Cam 40B, Cam 278; Fabric GX, 19 sherds, Cam 307; Fabric HZ, 2 sherds; Fabric TZ, 1 sherd, Cam 497 variant.

Pottery dated: early-mid 3rd to 4th century.

L4, finds number 4, 31 g.

Fabric CL(NF), 1 sherd; Fabric CZ, 1 sherd, white painted bands on red-brown body, pale brown micaceous fabric speckled with common small red-brown and dark inclusions reminiscent of Nene Valley fabrics, source unknown; Fabric EA, 1 sherd with white barbotine; Fabric GX, 2 sherds; Fabric KX, 1 sherd.
Pottery dated: early-mid 3rd to 4th century.

T2

L3, finds number 12, 117 g.

Fabric AA, 1 sherd; Fabric BA(SG) 2 sherds, Dr 27; BA(CG) 1 sherd; Fabric DJ, 2 sherds; Fabric EC, lid (similar to CAR 10, Type 70, no 114); Fabric GA, 1 sherd Cam 303; Fabric GB, 1 sherd, Cam 37A; Fabric GX, 6 sherds, Cam 120, Cam 243-244/246; Fabric TZ, Cam 195 flange.
Pottery dated: early 2nd to late 2nd/early 3rd century.

L5, finds number 11, 244 g.

Fabric AA, 1 sherd; Fabric DJ, 3 sherds; Fabric GX 3 sherds, Cam 108, Cam 241/242; Fabric HZ, 13 sherds from one pot, Cam 256, CAR 10, Type 35; Fabric WC, 1 sherd.
Pottery dated: 1st-early 2nd century.

T3

L8, finds number 9, 75 g.

Fabric CH, 1 sherd, Fabric DJ, 3 sherds, one red-brown with sand temper; Fabric EA, 1 sherd; Fabric GX, 4 sherds; Fabric KX, 1 sherd; Fabric HZ, 1 sherd.
Pottery dated: late 3rd-4th, probably 4th century.

Unstratified

Finds number 32

Fabric GA, 1 sherd; Fabric GB, 1 sherd; Fabric GX, 3 sherds, Cam 268, Cam 307.
Finds number includes medieval and modern pottery sherds.
Roman pottery dated: Residual, late 2nd/early 3rd to 4th century

6.4 Building materials

by B Holloway

Building material was the commonest find by weight (10.9kg). The majority of the material consisted of roofing tile, ie *imbrex* and *tegula* fragments (Table 3). This material was recovered from the majority of the excavated contexts, and in bulk from both the Roman demolition layers (L4 and L8) and as residual material in later contexts (L5).

In addition to roofing tile, two fragments of flue tile were recovered. The flue tiles derive from an underfloor heating system (hypocaust).

Flue tile was 'keyed' to allow plaster to adhere to its surface. Examples from this evaluation have two differing designs. The smaller of the two fragments has simple comb marks incised on it, while the second larger fragment has been marked using a roller stamp.

The flue tile indicates that a nearby Roman building had a hypocaust heating system, and so was of a reasonably high status. An additional indicator of status were cubes from a tessellated floor: the usual red tile *tesserae*, and two more unusual examples made from cream *tegula*. These were recovered from demolition material L8 in T3, and may show that there was a coloured border in a floor nearby. Further unstratified finds of building stone suggest a substantial, well-appointed building. This building material is again consistent with the reports of the Roman structural remains observed in 1865/1910.

Table 3: quantification of building materials only.

| Finds number | Context | Trench | Description | Weight (g) |
|--------------|---------|--------|------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | L1 | T1 | Roman tile | 5,978 |
| 2 | L2 | T1 | Roman tile | 1,114 |
| 2 | L2 | T1 | Flue tile, combed impression | 79 |
| 2 | L2 | T1 | Red <i>tessera</i> x 1 | 15 |
| 3 | L3 | T1 | Flue tile, roller-stamped | 252 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|----------------------------|--------|
| 12 | L3 | T2 | Roman tile | 2,067 |
| 9 | L8 | T3 | Roman tile | 221 |
| 9 | L8 | T3 | Cream <i>tesserae</i> x 2 | 37 |
| 10 | U/S | U/S | Roman tile | 822 |
| 10 | U/S | U/S | Building stone (greensand) | 4,000 |
| Total | | | | 14,585 |

6.5 Other finds

by B Holloway

This list (Table 4) excludes small finds, pottery and building materials (see above, sections 6.2-6.4).

Table 4: list of other finds.

| Finds number | Context | Trench | Description | Weight (g) |
|--------------|---------|--------|---|------------|
| 2 | L2 | T1 | Animal bone | 106 |
| 2 | L2 | T1 | <i>Opus signinum</i> mortar | 504 |
| 3 | L3 | T1 | Animal bone | 187 |
| 12 | L3 | T2 | Medieval pottery, 1 sherd. Note by Howard Brooks: This is a sherd of a Fabric 20 (medieval sandy grey ware: see <i>CAR 7</i>) vessel; it probably dates to the 13th century. | 6 |
| 13 | L3 | T2 | Melted Roman glass | 10 |
| 11 | L5 | T2 | Animal bone | 29 |
| 11 | L5 | T2 | Roman window glass? | 13 |
| Total | | | | 867 |

7 Discussion

The principal aim of this evaluation was to identify the uppermost significant archaeological horizon, so that the results could be fed into the design for the proposed new extension.

As was expected, the highest significant archaeological horizon was of Roman date (L4 in T1 and L8 in T3). The height of the top of this Roman horizon has been shown in a topographic profile (Fig 4). This shows both modern ground-level and the top of the Roman horizons across the site, both dropping down in height from south to north and apparently following the natural slope of the land.

Apart from the measurements described above, other archaeological conclusions are as follows. Although the modern college grounds have been heavily landscaped, modern ground-level still follows the natural drop in ground-level from south to north across the college grounds. The landscaping of the grassy bank where T1 and T2 were cut is very recent, as shown by the finding of modern plywood fragments approximately 1m below ground-level in L2 (T2).

The material finds from this evaluation were dominated by fragments of Roman brick and tile, substantial deposits of mortar and *opus signinum*, and *tesserae*. This material must be derived from the demolition of Roman buildings, and specifically of the Roman building identified in 1865/1910.

Evaluation trenches T1 and T3 were cut within the footprint of the Roman house identified in 1865/1910. No evidence of Roman floors, foundations or robber trenches was seen, because the trenches were too shallow, although it is surprising that T3 did not cut one of the foundations (see Fig 1). The highest Roman deposits were the demolition layer L4 in T1 and the mortary soil L8 in T3. These were demolition layers, and not *in situ* floors. Pottery from L4 dates it to the early-mid 3rd to 4th century, which may be the time when the building was demolished. Pottery from L8 is also dated to

the late 3rd-4th and probably 4th century. This may indicate that L8 is a soily horizon which accumulated over the ruins of the Roman building.

Over the Roman deposits L4 and L8 was a deep soil layer L3. This contained medieval pottery and peg-tile, and is most likely to date to the late medieval or post-medieval period.

Roman ground-level clearly followed the natural slope of the hill, but individual buildings were laid out on terraces. This was seen in the Roman buildings exposed in the 'mid-site' work (CAT Report 347) and also in the 1984-85 excavations (CAR 6, 127-37).

8 Archive deposition

The finds and paper archive are currently held by CAT at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3NF, but will be permanently deposited with Colchester and Ipswich Museums under accession code 2008.63.

9 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank the Sixth Form College for commissioning and funding the work. Site work was carried out by B Holloway assisted by N Rayner and C Lister; digital survey was by C Lister. The project was monitored by Martin Winter for Colchester Borough Council.

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11 Glossary

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| barbarous radiate | imitation 3rd-century AD Roman coin |
| EHER | Historic Environment Record |
| feature | an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a floor |
| IFA | Institute of Field Archaeologists |
| medieval | period from AD 1066 to around AD 1500 |
| modern | period from c AD 1800 to the present day |
| natural | geological deposit undisturbed by human activity |
| NGR | National Grid Reference |
| post-medieval | after around AD 1500 to around AD 1800 |
| RRSCAL | Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London |
| Roman | the period from AD 43 to around AD 410 |
| <i>tessera</i> | Roman floor cube |

12 Context list

| Context | Description | Finds | Date |
|---------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| L1 | Topsoil. Humic sandy silt. T1-T2 only | Residual Roman pottery, modern brick | modern |
| L2 | Dump deposit. Builders' waste, contained plywood, plastic, etc. T1-T2 | Modern brick, minor residual Roman pottery | modern |
| L3 | Medieval topsoil. Thick deposit of humic material intrusive tree roots | Roman pottery and tile, oyster shell, peg-tile, medieval pottery | late medieval or post-medieval |
| L4 | Mortar-rich Roman demolition deposit. T1 only | Roman pottery, <i>opus signinum</i> , mortar | Roman 3rd-4th century |
| L5 | Mixed and redeposited Roman material. T2 only. Sealed L2 | Roman pottery and tile, building stone | modern |
| L6 | Tarmac hardtop – service road surface | - | modern |
| L7 | Compacted crushed brick hardcore base layer for L6 | - | modern |
| L8 | Roman demolition material, contained mortar-rich pockets | Roman pottery and tile, building stone, <i>opus signinum</i> and mortar | Roman 3rd-4th century |

Distribution list:

the Sixth Form College
Roff Marsh Partnership
Martin Winter, Colchester Borough Council
Essex Historic Environment Record



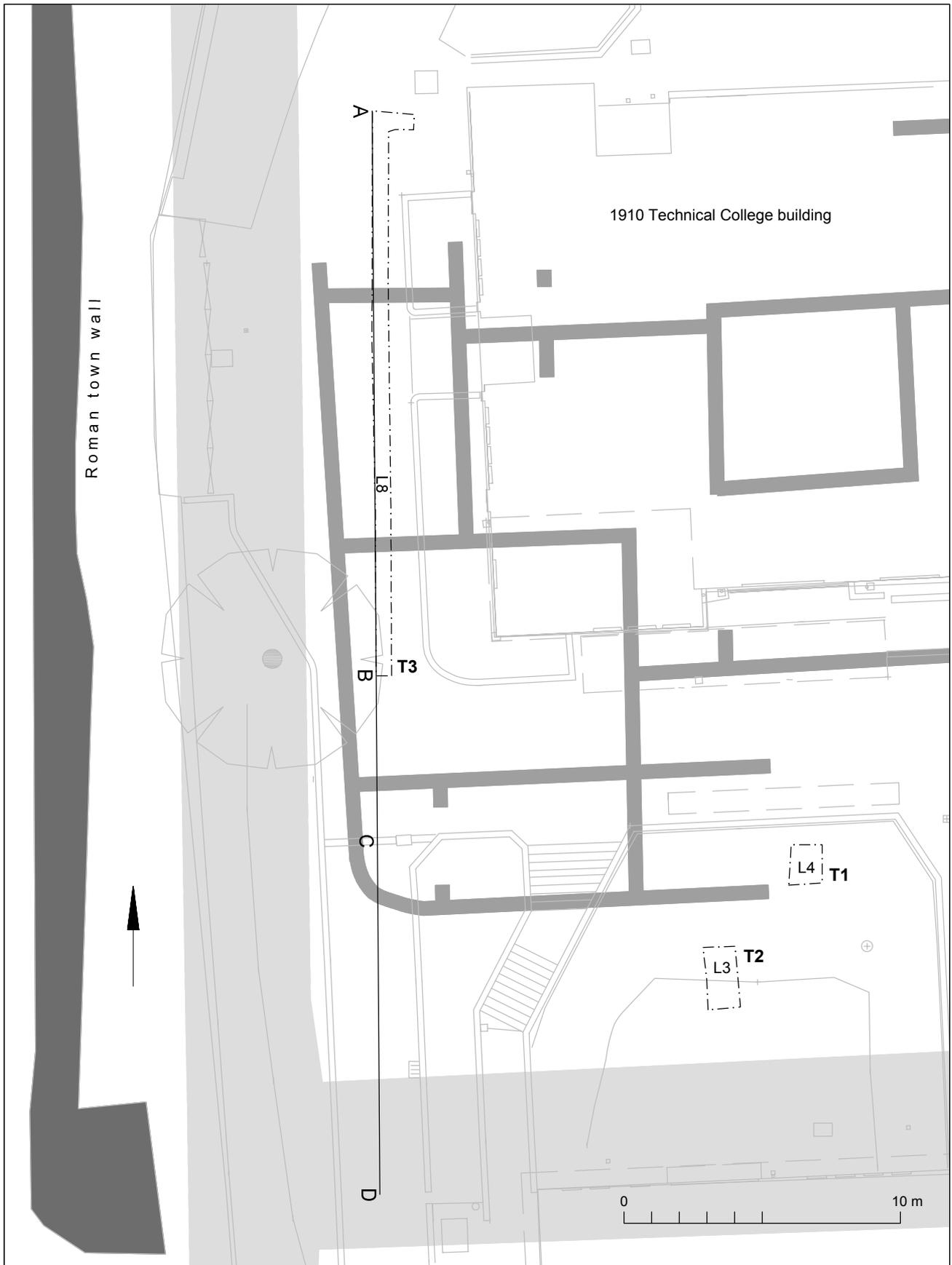
Colchester Archaeological Trust

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checked by: Philip Crummy
date: 18.06.08



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■ footprint of Roman town-house ■ projected Roman street

Fig 1 Location plan showing Roman town wall, projected Roman streets, and footprint of Roman town-house discovered in 1865 and 1910.

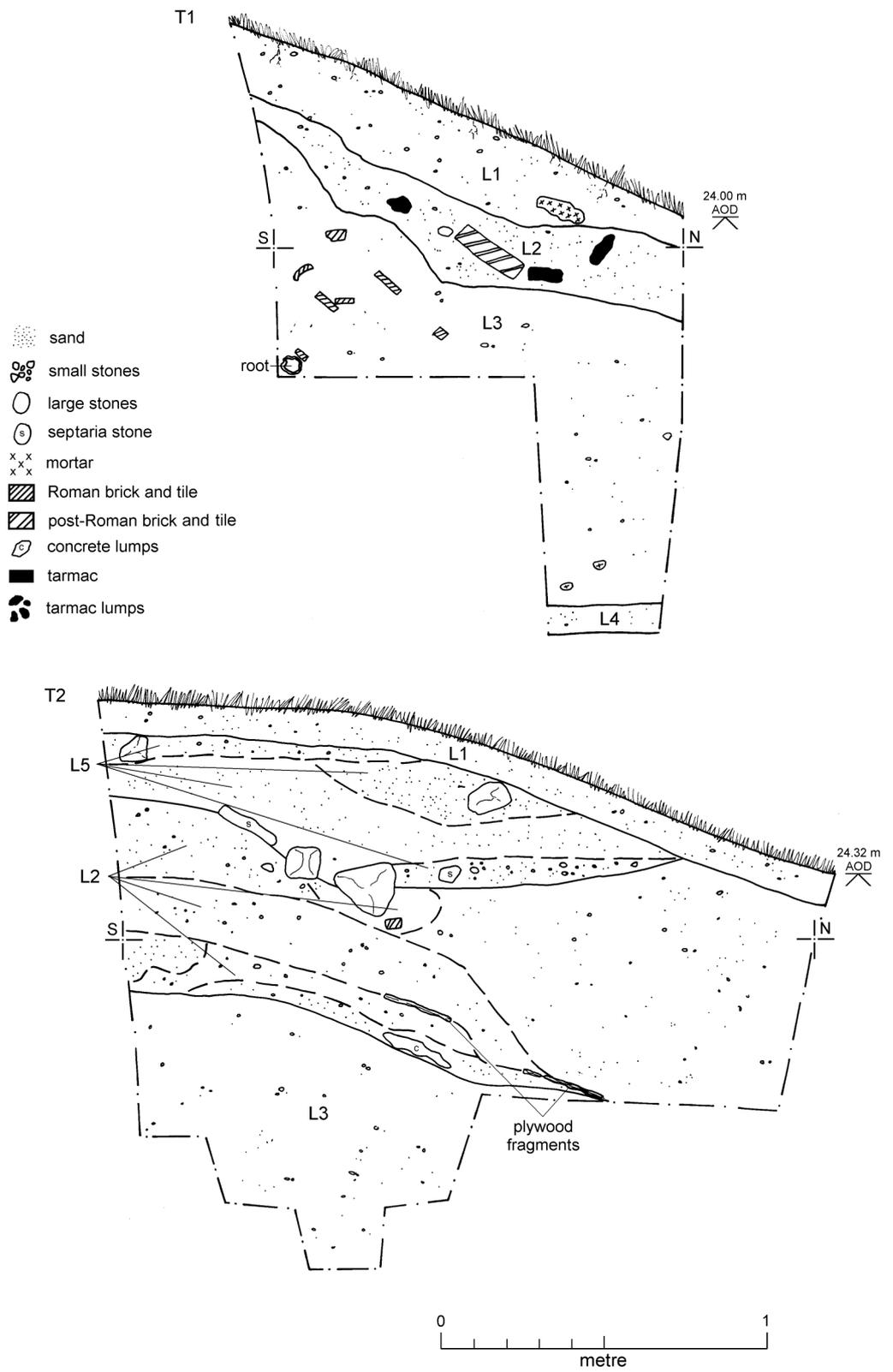


Fig 2 T1 and T2: sections.

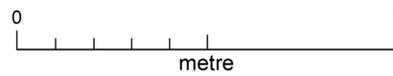
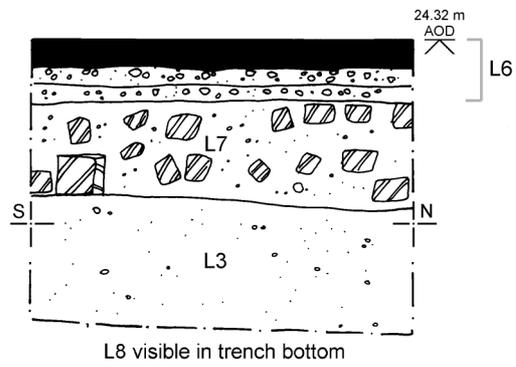
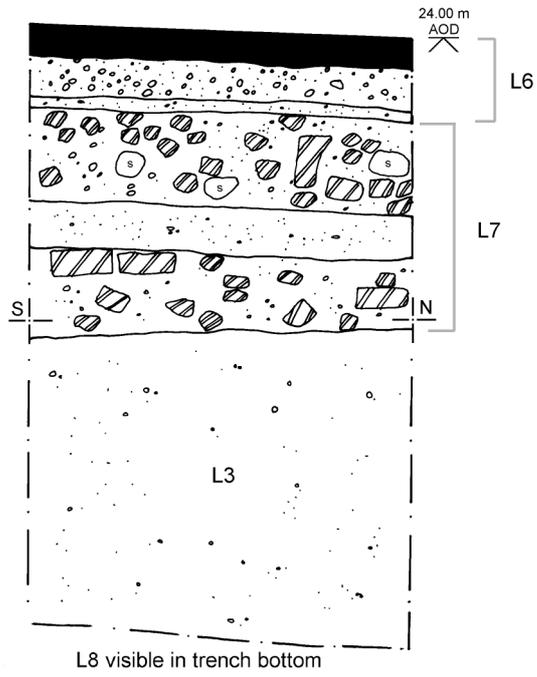


Fig 3 T3: sections – north end of T3 (above) and south end of T3 (below).

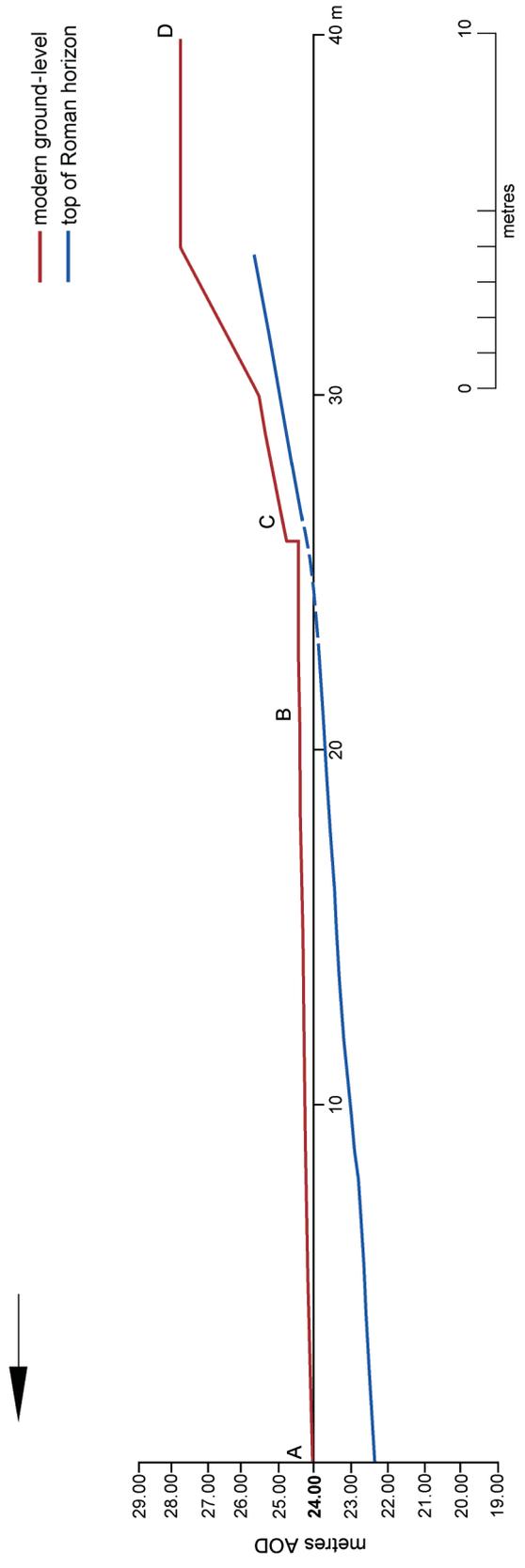


Fig 4 Profile comparing modern ground-level to the top of the Roman horizon.

**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

| | |
|--|--|
| Site address: 'South site', Sixth Form College, North Hill, Colchester, Essex | |
| Parish: Colchester | District: Colchester |
| NGR: TL 99255 25320 (c) | Site code: CAT project code 08/5d |
| Type of work: Evaluation | Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| Date of work: May 2008 | Size of area investigated: 24m of trenching |
| Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester and Ipswich Museums | Funding source: Sixth Form College |
| Further seasons anticipated? Yes | Related EHER nos: 43530, 12341, 12433-12437, 13108 |
| Final report: CAT Report 483 and summary in <i>EAH</i> | |
| Periods represented: Roman, medieval, modern | |
| <p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>An evaluation by three trenches has identified the uppermost significant archaeological horizon of Roman date on the site of the proposed extension to the 'south site' buildings at the Sixth Form College. A north-south profile was reconstructed using the results from all the trenches, and it became apparent that the Roman levels showed no clear evidence of terracing but instead broadly reflect the natural north-south slope of the land today.</i></p> <p><i>The finds from the evaluation are dominated by fragments of Roman brick and tile, with lesser quantities of mortar, opus signinum, and tesserae. This material must be derived from the demolition of Roman buildings, and specifically of the Roman building first discovered in 1865 and investigated further in 1910 when the Technical College was constructed.</i></p> <p><i>Although two of the trenches were cut within the footprint of this Roman building, none of its foundations or floors were seen, mainly because the evaluation trenches were not sufficiently deep.</i></p> <p><i>The highest Roman deposits were rubble or mortar layers dating to the early-mid 3rd to 4th century, when the Roman building was probably demolished. The Roman deposits are sealed by a deep late medieval or post-medieval topsoil, which is itself sealed by soils dumped during the 1980s landscaping.</i></p> | |
| Previous summaries/reports: None | |
| Keywords: Roman, building, demolition, street | Significance: * |
| Author of summary: Ben Holloway and Howard Brooks | Date of summary: June 2008 |